

What is Claimed:

1 1. In a computer network including a user's computer and a
2 control server connected for communication, the user's computer running an
3 e-mail program and a browser program, a method for integrating e-mail and
4 browser communications with the user, comprising the steps of:
5 in an initial HTML e-mail communication with the user over the
6 network, embedding a signal which, upon operation of the HTML on the user's
7 computer, causes transmission to the control server of an ID code signal
8 available at the user's computer and uniquely associated with the user or his
9 computer and, upon receiving the ID code signal at the control server, storing
10 it at the server in association with information related to the user available to
11 the control server;
12 in a subsequent HTML communication with the user over the
13 network, embedding a signal which, upon operation of the HTML on the user's
14 computer, causes transmission to the control server of the ID code signal and
15 receiving the same at the control server; and
16 making use of the ID code signal, recovering information about the
17 user available to the control server and, using that information, preparing a
18 response for transmission to the user's computer.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the e-mail program and
2 browser program can both read and write cookies, the ID code signal being
3 saved on the user's computer in a cookie.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the cookie is created at the
2 control server and is updated after an HTML communication from the user to

1 the control server, is sent to the user's computer in response to the HTML
2 communication, and is saved therein.

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1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the control server stores a
2 mailing list containing the identity of users and an ID code signal uniquely
3 identified with each user, the mailing list being used to generate the initial HTML
4 e-mail.

1 5. The method of claim 3, wherein the cookie contains a history
2 of prior information sent to the user.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the ID code signal is
2 embedded in the initial HTML e-mail and is transmitted from the user's computer
3 after the initial e-mail is received and opened by the user, the initial HTML
4 e-mail containing executable code which causes the ID code signal to be stored
5 on the user's computer.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the e-mail program and
2 browser program can both read and write cookies, the ID code signal being
3 saved on the user's computer in a cookie.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the cookie is created at the
2 control server and is updated after an HTML communication from the user to
3 the control server, is sent to the user's computer in response to the HTML
4 communication, and is saved therein.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the cookie contains a history
2 of prior information sent to the user.

1 10. The method of claim 6, wherein the control server stores a
2 mailing list containing the identity of users and an ID code signal uniquely
3 identified with each user, the mailing list being used to generate the initial HTML
4 e-mail.

1 11. The method of claim 10, wherein the e-mail program and
2 browser program can both read and write cookies, the ID code signal being
3 saved on the user's computer in a cookie.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the cookie is created at the
2 control server and is updated after an HTML communication from the user to
3 the control server, is sent to the user's computer in response to the HTML
4 communication, and is saved therein.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the cookie contains a
2 history of prior information sent to the user.

1 14. The method of claim 10, wherein the control server is an Ad
2 server which provides online advertising to users and selects advertising signals
3 for transmission to a user based on the ID code signal received from the user.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the control server selects
2 advertising signals for transmission to a user based on information present in the
3 cookie stored on the user's computer.

1 16. The method of claim 6, wherein the control server is an Ad
2 server which provides online advertising to users and selects advertising signals
3 for transmission to a user based on the ID code signal received from the user.

1 17. The method of claim 6, wherein the control server selects
2 advertising signals for transmission to a user based on information present in the
3 cookie stored on the user's computer.

1 18. The method of claim 10, wherein the control server selects
2 advertising signals for transmission to a user based on information present in the
3 cookie stored on the user's computer.